

## **HSR&D Centers of Excellence Solicitation**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

- 1) Are facilities that have current HSR&D CoE's eligible to apply?

Answer: No

- 2) Does the director or co-director need to be an MD or is this only applicable for clinically focused CoEs?

Answer: Director or Co-director must be an MD.

- 3) Does the definition of the 3<sup>rd</sup> area in the solicitation (decision making) include consideration of an informatics focused CoE?

Answer: Informatics could be a component of the CoE topical area. Limited development of software or IT program development would be appropriate. Cost sharing would be a key element in approving developmental proposals.

- 4) How are collaborative CoEs viewed, especially those that may span VISNs? For example, would collaboration of two sites working together to create one CoE be acceptable?

Answer: We prefer single-site CoEs. Collaborative CoEs may be considered if within the same VISN and it is well-defended in the proposal. Including collaboration with investigators from outside the VISN to augment a COE proposal is appropriate but this collaboration may not include sharing core CoE funding across VISNs.

- 5) Is there any limitation on how many CoEs can be in a VISN? (relates somewhat to the first question above)

Answer: No.

- 6) Is there any limitation on how many CoEs can be in a small geographic area such as 100-mile limit, a city, 1-mile?

Answer: No, but close proximity to an existing CoE must be defended in the proposal. We prefer geographically separate CoEs. At a minimum, a proposed CoE cannot be located at the same VA medical facility as an existing CoE.

- 7) Is there a number of VA-based investigators required for a site to be eligible to submit a COE application?

Answer: No. The solicitation does not specify a number of investigators needed to be eligible to apply. However, potential applicants should review the current number of VA/HSR&D funded projects for their anticipated core group of investigators to determine the strength/experience of their team/leadership (Page 4, #9, #3 and #5).

- 8) Is applying for both the HSR&D and Clinical CoE solicitations prohibited?

Answer: No. Each application will be reviewed separately, but Clinical CoE and HSR&D representatives will be sharing and monitoring overlap. For both solicitations, one of the key issues will be the level of current capacity. The hope is to leverage and enhance a pre-existing base of research talent.

9) Can the focus of an application cross/cover more than one theme?

Answer: Yes

10) What is meant by the phrase “make the Veterans Health Administration a learning organization?”

Answer: Helping VHA evolve into a health care system that eagerly and rapidly puts new knowledge into place to improve patient care. We encourage applications that propose innovative approaches to identify and improve weaknesses in the health care system.